

1 Blaine Bookey (SBN 267596)
2 Neela Chakravartula (SBN 254746)*
3 Kate Jastram (SBN 127625)
4 Karen Musalo (SBN 106882)
5 Anne Peterson (SBN 258673)*
6 CENTER FOR GENDER & REFUGEE STUDIES
7 200 McAllister Street
8 San Francisco, CA 94102
Telephone: (415) 565-4877
Fax: (415) 581-8824
bookeybl@uchastings.edu
neela@uchastings.edu
musalok@uchastings.edu
jastramkate@uchastings.edu
petersonanne@uchastings.edu

Christine Lin (SBN 239266)
CGRS-California
200 McAllister Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
Telephone: (415) 565-4877
Fax: (415) 581-8824
linc@uchastings.edu

9 *Not admitted in this Court

10 Attorneys for Amici Curiae

11

12

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

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NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

14

SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION

15

16 East Bay Sanctuary Covenant, *et al.*,

CASE NO.: 3:19-CV-04073-JST

17

Plaintiffs,

**MOTION OF AMICI CURIAE NON-
PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AND LAW
SCHOOL CLINICS FOR LEAVE TO FILE
IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' MOTION
TO CONSIDER SUPPLEMENTAL
EVIDENCE AND RESTORE THE
NATIONWIDE SCOPE OF THE
INJUNCTION**

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v.

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William P. Barr, *et al.*,

Defendants.

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1 TO ALL PARTIES AND THEIR ATTORNEYS OF RECORD:

2 PLEASE TAKE NOTICE THAT the undersigned non-profit organizations and law school
 3 clinics, move for leave to file a brief as amici curiae in support of Plaintiffs' Motion to Consider
 4 Supplemental Evidence and Restore the Nationwide Scope of the Injunction (Dkt. No. 57). A
 5 copy of the proposed amicus brief, which addresses the impact the rule will have on organizations
 6 serving asylum seekers as well as asylum seekers themselves, is submitted with this motion as
 7 Exhibit A. Counsel for the parties have consented to the relief sought in this motion and to the
 8 filing of a brief. Defendants' consent is contingent upon this brief being filed today, August 19,
 9 2019, and Defendants further reserve the right to raise challenges to the brief's claims.

10 The district court has "broad discretion" to determine when leave to file an amicus brief is
 11 appropriate. *See Hoptowit v. Ray*, 682 F.2d 1237, 1260 (9th Cir. 1982), *abrogated on other*
 12 *grounds by Sandin v. Conner*, 515 U.S. 472 (1995), *as recognized by Montijo v. Swaney*, 754
 13 F.App'x 522, 524 (9th Cir. 2018) (unpublished). "District courts frequently welcome amicus
 14 briefs from non-parties concerning legal issues that have potential ramifications beyond the
 15 parties directly involved or if the amicus has 'unique information or perspective that can help the
 16 court beyond the help that the lawyers for the parties are able to provide.'" *NGV Gaming, Ltd. v.*
 17 *Upstream Point Molate, LLC*, 355 F. Supp. 2d 1061, 1067 (N.D. Cal. 2005) (quoting *Cobell v.*
 18 *Norton*, 246 F. Supp. 2d 59, 62 (D.D.C. 2003)).

19 Here, proposed amici have "unique information or perspective" that can be of assistance
 20 to the court because they are public interest organizations with longstanding commitments to
 21 serving asylum seekers and other immigrants. *Id.* Together these organizations, made up of
 22 recognized experts in the field, have engaged in asylum work and research for decades. Of the
 23 thousands of asylum seekers they represent, a substantial portion of them sought safe haven at the
 24 U.S.-Mexico border and would be barred from protection due to having transited through a third
 25 country under the Administration's latest unlawful attempt to eviscerate the U.S. asylum system
 26 as we have known it for the last four decades. Amici thus have a strong interest in the issues in
 27 this case that impact their core missions and fall within their areas of expertise.

1 **Advocates for Human Rights**, located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, has provided free
2 legal representation to asylum seekers for more than 30 years. In 2018, with the help of hundreds
3 of volunteer attorneys, The Advocates provided legal consultation, pro se assistance, and full
4 representation to over 1100 people fleeing persecution, torture, and trafficking.

5 **Amnesty International USA**, headquartered in New York City, New York, works on the
6 right to seek asylum.

7 **Asylum Seeker Assistance Project**, located in Washington, D.C., works with asylum
8 seekers in the DC metropolitan area to rebuild their lives with dignity and purpose and to make
9 valuable contributions to our community.

10 **Catholic Charities, Immigrant and Refugee Services, New York**, based in New York
11 City, each year serves thousands of asylum-seekers with their legal defense needs and refugees
12 with their resettlement needs.

13 **Center for Gender and Refugee Studies**, located in San Francisco, California, which led
14 the drafting and filing of this brief, advances protections for refugee women, children and others
15 who flee persecution in their home countries and has played a central role in the development of
16 law and policy related to asylum and related forms of protection.

17 **Centro Legal de la Raza** is the largest removal defense organization in California, the
18 second largest in the U.S., and represents asylum seekers directly. The organization serves a large
19 indigenous Mayan community in the Fruitvale District of Oakland.

20 **Community Justice Alliance**, headquartered in Sacramento, is dedicated to racial and
21 immigrant justice. Our volunteer attorneys litigate to protect California communities in areas of
22 removal defense, post conviction relief, and civil rights violation cases.

23 **Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA)** provides legal assistance to
24 low-income individuals and families in East Palo Alto, California and the surrounding
25 community.

26 **Dolores Street Community Services**, located in San Francisco, California, nurtures
27 individual wellness and cultivates collective power among low-income and immigrant

1 communities; its Deportation Defense and Legal Advocacy Program provides pro bono
 2 representation to indigent and particularly vulnerable immigrant communities, including many
 3 asylum seekers.

4 **HIAS** is the American Jewish community's refugee agency, and the oldest refugee
 5 serving organization in the world. For almost 140 years, HIAS has assisted immigrants and
 6 refugees seeking safety in the United States. Today, based in Silver Spring, HIAS provides legal
 7 services and wrap around support to asylum seekers in the metro Washington, DC region and in
 8 New York City. HIAS also provides legal services to asylum seekers along the Southern Border,
 9 in San Diego and in El Paso, as well as in Ciudad Juarez.

10 **Human Rights Initiative of North Texas** is a non-profit legal services agency in Dallas,
 11 Texas that represents people fleeing humanitarian abuses from all over the world; its clients
 12 include asylum seekers pursuing relief through both affirmative and defensive proceedings.

13 **Immigrant Legal Defense** (ILD) is a nonprofit agency in Oakland dedicated to providing
 14 free immigration legal services to immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. ILD's mission is to
 15 promote justice through the provision of legal representation to underserved immigrant
 16 communities.

17 **Immigrant Legal Resource Center** (ILRC) of San Francisco is a national nonprofit
 18 resource center that provides immigration legal trainings, technical assistance, and educational
 19 materials, and engages in advocacy and immigrant civic engagement to advance immigrant rights.
 20 In our work supporting legal advocates, ILRC frequently provides technical advice on asylum
 21 law, and ILRC publishes a widely-used manual on asylum law, *Essentials of Asylum Law* (ILRC,
 22 4th Ed.). ILRC thus has a strong interest in ensuring that federal and international laws providing
 23 a right to seek asylum are followed by the U.S. government.

24 **Immigration and Human Rights Clinic at the District of Columbia** represents
 25 individuals seeking asylum.

26 **International Refugee Assistance Project, Inc.** is a legal advocacy organization for
 27 refugees and displaced people in need of a safe place to call home. Located in New York City, it

1 works with clients to identify and navigate pathways to safety through free direct representation,
 2 policy advocacy, and litigation.

3 **International Rescue Committee**, headquartered in New York City, is the nation's
 4 largest refugee resettlement organization with offices in more than 25 cities across the country
 5 and 40 countries around the world; it works with asylum seekers along the U.S.-Mexico border as
 6 well as on the ground in many of the countries people are fleeing.

7 **Loyola Immigrant Justice Clinic** (LIJC), located in Los Angeles, is a non-profit,
 8 community-based collaboration of Loyola Law School, Loyola Marymount University, Dolores
 9 Mission Parish and Homeboy Industries Inc. LIJC's dual pronged mission is to advance the rights
 10 of the indigent immigrant community through direct legal services, education and community
 11 empowerment, while teaching law students effective immigrants' rights lawyering in a real-world
 12 setting. LIJC offers consultations to, retains, and finds pro bono representation for hundreds of
 13 asylum seekers annually, develops programs tailored for asylum seekers, and has clients who will
 14 be directly impacted by the current litigation.

15 **National Justice for Our Neighbors** (NJFON) is headquartered in Annandale, Virginia,
 16 and supports nineteen sites nationwide. NJFON provides hospitality and compassion to low-
 17 income immigrants through immigration legal services, advocacy, and education.

18 **National Survivor Network** (NSN) is based in Los Angeles, and is a nonprofit focused
 19 on bringing together survivors of diverse kinds of human trafficking to build a national anti-
 20 trafficking movement.

21 **Pangea Legal Services** is a nonprofit legal services organization in San Francisco,
 22 California, that supports immigrant communities through direct legal representation, policy
 23 advocacy, education, and community empowerment efforts.

24 **Program for Torture Victims**, located in Los Angeles, California, serves many Central
 25 American and African asylum seekers.

26 **Public Counsel's** Immigrants' Rights Project, located in Los Angeles, California, has
 27 been providing pro bono legal representation to asylum seekers for over 30 years before U.S.

1 Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Executive Office for Immigration Review, and the
2 federal courts.

9 **University of California, Davis Immigration Law Clinic** defends the rights of asylum
10 seekers and has an interest in insuring that asylum eligibility follows the rule of law and
11 international and domestic law.

12 Amici respectfully submit that their proposed brief could aid the court in evaluating the
13 exceptional importance of the issues presented and the proper application of federal laws to
14 ensure they are applied uniformly and afford right to asylum protection widely as Congress
15 intended and our international obligations require.

16 For the foregoing reasons, amici respectfully request that the Court grant leave to file the
17 attached amicus brief on August 19, 2019.

18 | Dated: August 19, 2019

Respectfully submitted,

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/s/ Blaine Bookey

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Blaine Bookey

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Neela Chakravarthy

1

Anne Peterson*
Karen Musale

23

Karen Musalo
Kate Jastram

24

Kate Jaschinski
Center for Gender

25

Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
UC Hastings College of the Law
200 McAllister Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

26

Christine Lin

20

CGRS-California

21

200 McAllister Street
San Francisco, California 94102

1 P: (415) 565-4877
2 F: (415) 581-8824

3 *Not admitted in this Court

4 *Attorneys for Amici Curiae*

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Exhibit A

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2 Neela Chakravartula (SBN 254746)*
3 Kate Jastram (SBN 127625)
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6 CENTER FOR GENDER & REFUGEE STUDIES
7 200 McAllister Street
8 San Francisco, CA 94102
Telephone: (415) 565-4877
Fax: (415) 581-8824
bookeybl@uchastings.edu
neela@uchastings.edu
musalok@uchastings.edu
jastramkate@uchastings.edu
petersonanne@uchastings.edu

Christine Lin (SBN 239266)
CGRS-California
200 McAllister Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
Telephone: (415) 565-4877
Fax: (415) 581-8824
linc@uchastings.edu

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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

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NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

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SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION

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16 East Bay Sanctuary Covenant, *et al.*,

CASE NO.: 3:19-CV-04073-JST

17

Plaintiffs,

**BRIEF OF AMICI CURIAE NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATIONS AND LAW SCHOOL
CLINICS IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS'
MOTION TO CONSIDER
SUPPLEMENTAL EVIDENCE AND
RESTORE THE NATIONWIDE SCOPE
OF THE INJUNCTION**

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v.

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William P. Barr, *et al.*,

IMMIGRATION ACTION

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Defendants.

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INTRODUCTION AND INTEREST OF AMICI CURIAE

This brief explains why this Court was correct to enjoin the third country asylum rule and why anything other than a nationwide injunction will cause substantial harm to the Plaintiffs and to thousands of migrants in desperate need of protection.

The current Administration has displayed a singular focus over the last two years—to dismantle the U.S. asylum system by executive fiat in circumvention of the law and constitutionally mandated separation of powers. Its previous attempts to thwart the will of Congress and slam the United States’ doors on the persecuted have rightly been blocked by the courts, including this one. *See, e.g., E. Bay Sanctuary Covenant v. Trump*, 349 F. Supp. 3d 838 (N.D. Cal. 2018) (enjoining rule banning asylum for individuals who cross the border outside a port of entry); *O.A. v. Trump*, No. 18-2838, 2019 WL 3536334 (D.D.C. Aug. 2, 2019) (same); *J.O.P. v. U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Sec.*, No. GJH-19-1944, 2019 WL 3536786 (D. Md. Aug. 2, 2019) (enjoining policy stripping unaccompanied children from having their claims first heard in a non-adversarial setting); *Grace v. Whitaker*, 344 F. Supp. 3d 96 (D.D.C. 2018) (enjoining policy categorically foreclosing protection to certain groups of asylum seekers in expedited removal), *appeal docketed*, No. 19-5013 (D.C. Cir. Jan. 30, 2019). Its latest attempt to render ineligible for asylum individuals who transited through a third country before seeking protection at the southern border fared no better before this Court, which correctly enjoined the rule as inconsistent with existing asylum laws that only authorize sending asylum seekers to third countries in limited circumstances—where a Safe Third Country Agreement exists or the applicant is firmly resettled—to ensure “we do not deliver aliens into the hands of their persecutors.” *E. Bay Sanctuary Covenant v. Barr*, 385 F. Supp. 3d 922, 958 (N.D. Cal. 2019).

If permitted to take effect, the rule will have severe consequences across the country, eliminating a critical form of protection with life or death consequences for people long recognized as meriting asylum and violating the United States' treaty obligations to administer protection without discrimination and to avoid "in any manner whatsoever" returning individuals

1 to danger. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, art. 33, ¶ 1, 198 U.N.T.S. 150, 176
 2 (July 28, 1951) (Refugee Convention).

3 Amici curiae¹ are twenty-four non-profit organizations and law school clinics that
 4 represent asylum seekers across the country. Of the thousands of asylum seekers they represent, a
 5 substantial portion of them sought safe haven at the U.S.-Mexico border and would be barred
 6 from protection from having transited through a third country under the Administration's latest
 7 unlawful attempt to eviscerate the U.S. asylum system as we have known it for the last four
 8 decades. Amici thus have a strong interest in the scope of this Court's rightful injunction of this
 9 unlawful policy; and in the proper application of federal laws to ensure they are applied uniformly
 10 and afford the right to asylum protection as widely as Congress intended and the United States'
 11 international obligations require.²

12 Amici respectfully urge this Court to issue a new nationwide injunction based on the
 13 Plaintiffs' supplemented record to ensure uniform administration of our immigration statutes and
 14 to stop this cruel and unlawful policy that strikes at the core of the United States' fundamental
 15 values and longstanding laws.

16 **ARGUMENT**

17 **I. The Third Country Asylum Rule Would Eliminate Asylum for the Very People U.S.
 18 Laws Have Long Protected and Result in Refoulement of Bona Fide Refugees.**

19 Because this Court has already correctly concluded that the new rule is likely unlawful,
 20 amici provide only a brief overview of the merits.³

21 Individuals seeking asylum at the United States' southern border are fleeing gender-based
 22 violence, violence perpetrated by gangs, and politically, racially and religiously motivated

23 ¹ Amici are listed and described in the accompanying Motion for Leave to File this Amicus Brief.

24 ² The parties consent to this filing. Defendants' consent is contingent upon this brief being filed
 25 today, August 19, 2019, and Defendants further reserve the right to raise challenges to the brief's
 26 claims. No person or entity other than amici authored or contributed funds intended for its
 preparation or submission.

27 ³ Amici agree with Plaintiffs' clear and cogent arguments, not repeated in this brief, regarding the
 28 inconsistency between the rule and the Safe Third Country and firm resettlement statutory
 provisions.

1 persecution, among other heinous acts. *See, e.g.*, Administrative Record (AR) 293-95. There are
 2 many reasons asylum seekers fleeing this sort of violence are often unable to take a direct route to
 3 the United States, including the exigent circumstances of their flight and the lack of visas that
 4 would permit them to board a plane to the U.S. to seek asylum. The immigration agency and the
 5 courts have recognized this reality—that asylum seekers may pass through multiple countries
 6 while searching for refuge but continue on to the United States because they cannot find safety in
 7 the transited countries, or because they wish to reunify with family in the United States. *See, e.g.*,
 8 *Gulla v. Gonzales*, 498 F.3d 911, 917 (9th Cir. 2007); *Matter of Pula*, 19 I&N Dec. 467, 474
 9 (B.I.A. 1987).

10 Since passage of the Refugee Act in 1980, these individuals have been eligible for asylum
 11 so long as they satisfy the stringent burden of establishing they meet the definition of a refugee.
 12 *See* 8 U.S.C. §§ 1101(a)(42), 1158. The Administration aims to uproot Congress’ long held and
 13 unambiguous intent regarding the scope of the United States’ asylum laws. Under the new rule,
 14 asylum seekers who fail to apply for protection from persecution or torture in at least one country
 15 before coming to the United States “shall be found ineligible for asylum,” subject to only limited
 16 exceptions. 8 C.F.R. § 208.13(c)(4). This complete ban would eviscerate the U.S. asylum system,
 17 stripping this life saving protection for all non-Mexican asylum seekers entering at the southern
 18 border, who necessarily will have transited through a third country.

19 The practical effect of this rule would be to force asylum seekers to seek protection in
 20 Mexico or Guatemala, which will undoubtedly result in U.S. violations of the duty of non-
 21 refoulement wherever it is permitted to take effect. Refugee Convention, Article 33.1. News
 22 outlets, human rights organizations, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and
 23 the U.S. government have all documented the extreme dangers for migrants and shortcomings of
 24 the asylum processes in both countries. *See, e.g.*, AR 636-37 (Wall Street Journal article); 700
 25 (Reuters article), 703 (Human Rights First Factsheet), 721-24 (Amnesty International report).
 26 Moreover, the rule violates the principle of non-discrimination found in Article 3 of the Refugee
 27 Convention and the U.S. refugee protection system by precluding from asylum protection any
 28

1 non-Mexican fleeing persecution who is unable to enter by air, or sea, and therefore arrives at a
 2 land port of entry. *See Bringas-Rodriguez v. Sessions*, 850 F.3d 1051, 1059-60 (9th Cir. 2017) (en
 3 banc) (examining history of the Refugee Act leading to the “nondiscriminatory definition of
 4 refugee”). In doing so, it clearly places cruel and manifestly unsafe obstacles in front of asylum
 5 seekers traveling by land from non-contiguous countries. Like its previous policies intent on
 6 eliminating the United States’ asylum system by decree, the Administration’s new rule is patently
 7 unlawful in flagrant violation of the United States’ bedrock domestic and international obligations
 8 to protect the persecuted.

9 **II. A Nationwide Injunction is Necessary to Avert the Grave Consequences of
 10 Permitting Third Country Asylum Rule to Take Effect.**

11 The third country asylum rule will cause harm to asylum seekers and their representatives
 12 across the country. To start, applying a different rule within the Ninth Circuit is not administrable
 13 given that asylum seekers, in amici’s vast experience, often do not appear in the same jurisdiction
 14 throughout the life of their case. Even though an asylum seeker may seek protection at a border
 15 point within the Ninth Circuit, for example, she may be transferred to a detention center in New
 16 Jersey and then, if able to secure release, end up before an immigration judge in Florida (and even
 17 later move and change venue to California). Moreover, ensuring that asylum seekers moving
 18 across jurisdictions have accurate information as to their eligibility for protection will be
 19 extremely difficult, made exponentially more so for those without an attorney. As many courts
 20 have recognized, asylum law, including its accompanying procedures, is one of the most complex
 21 areas of U.S. law and availability of this protection should not be left to chance. Moreover,
 22 offering asylum in one jurisdiction but denying that same life-saving protection in the rest of the
 23 country violates the important principle of uniformity, as well as the United States’ domestic and
 24 international obligations.

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2 **CONCLUSION**

3 Amici support the issuance of a nationwide injunction, and they respectfully request that
4 the Court grant Plaintiffs' request.

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7 Dated: August 19, 2019

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9 Respectfully submitted,

10 /s/ Blaine Bookey

11 Blaine Bookey
12 Neela Chakravartula*
13 Anne Peterson*
14 Karen Musalo
15 Kate Jastram
16 Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
17 UC Hastings College of the Law
18 200 McAllister Street
19 San Francisco, CA 94102

20 Christine Lin
21 CGRS-California
22 200 McAllister Street
23 San Francisco, California 94102
24 P: (415) 565-4877
25 F: (415) 581-8824

26 *Not admitted in this Court

27 *Attorneys for Amici Curiae*

28

1
2 **LIST OF AMICI**
3

4 Amnesty International
5 New York, New York

6 Asylum Seeker Assistance Project
7 Washington, D.C.

8 Catholic Charities, Immigrant and Refugee Services
9 New York, New York

10 Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
11 San Francisco, California

12 Centro Legal de La Raza
13 Oakland, California

14 Community Justice Alliance
15 Sacramento, California

16 Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto
17 East Palo Alto, California

18 Dolores Street Community Services
19 San Francisco, California

20 HIAS
21 Silver Spring, Maryland

22 Human Rights Initiative of North Texas
23 Dallas, Texas

24 Immigrant Legal Defense
25 Oakland, California

26 Immigrant Legal Resource Center
27 San Francisco, California

28 Immigration and Human Rights Clinic, University of the District of Columbia Law School
29 Washington, D.C.

30 International Refugee Assistance Project, Inc.
31 New York, New York

32 International Rescue Committee (IRC)
33 New York, New York

34 Loyola Immigrant Justice Clinic
35 Los Angeles, California

36 National Justice For Our Neighbors
37 Annandale, Virginia

1 National Survivor Network
2 Los Angeles, California
3 Pangea Legal Services
4 San Francisco, California
5 Program for Torture Victims (PTV)
6 Los Angeles, California

7 Public Counsel
8 Los Angeles, California

9 Sanctuary for Families
10 New York, New York

11 The Advocates for Human Rights
12 Minneapolis, Minnesota

13 UC Davis Immigration Law Clinic
14 Davis, California

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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION

East Bay Sanctuary Covenant, *et al.*,
Plaintiffs,
v.
William P. Barr, *et al.*,
Defendants.

CASE NO.: 3:19-CV-04073-JST
**[PROPOSED] ORDER GRANTING
MOTION OF NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATIONS AND LAW SCHOOL
CLINICS FOR LEAVE TO FILE AN
AMICUS CURIAE BRIEF**

This matter comes before the Court on a Motion for Leave to File an Amicus Brief in Support of Plaintiffs, filed by non-profit organizations and law school clinics. The Motion includes the proposed amicus brief as an exhibit. Good cause appearing, the Court hereby GRANTS the Motion.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATED: _____, 2019.

Hon. Jon S. Tigar